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## Inside UMaine, vol. 3, no. 8

Department of Public Affairs and Marketing

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## Soils Scientist Osher: Think Globally, Act Locally

Soils scientist Laurie Osher has a few ideas about how we can grow healthier gardens this summer and cut back on greenhouse gas pollution in the process.

The answer is literally under foot.

The life system in the soil is as complex and miraculous as the life system above ground, says Osher, a faculty member in the Department of Plant, Soil and Environmental Sciences. The tens of thousands of microscopic organisms living in the soil liberate nutrients for garden crops by decomposing organic matter.

"I'm basically an advocate of getting people to compost. Agriculture is naturally extractive, so if you're going to grow things every year, you're going to have to add nutrients, either chemical fertilizer or nutrient-rich organic matter," says the recently named 2006 winner of the Sustainable Agriculture Faculty Award from the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture. "Composted kitchen waste or composted manure are good sources of nutrients."

Before joining the UMaine faculty, Osher studied how human beings have changed the nature of the soil in South American and Pacific rainforests. She measured the soil's organic matter content and found that converting forests to agricultural land adds carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), a greenhouse gas, to the atmosphere. Osher says she came to UMaine in 1999 with the idea to "think globally and act locally."

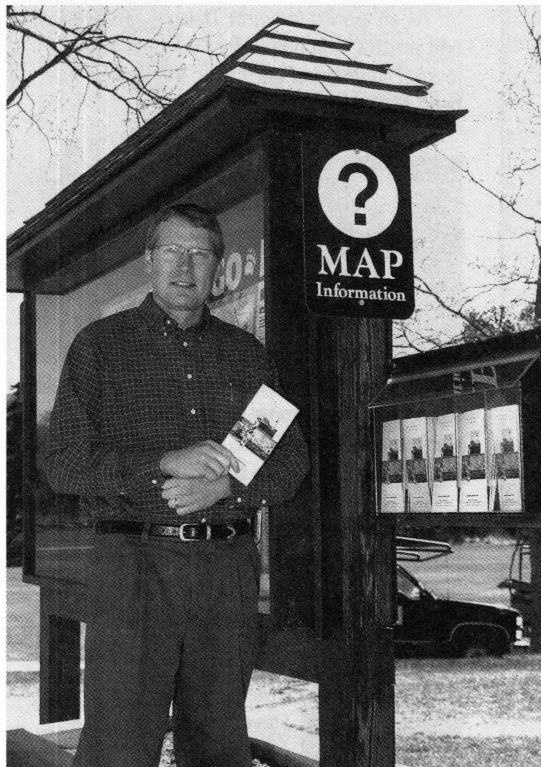
She says each of us can help reduce greenhouse gasses by composting kitchen scraps, grass clippings and leaves instead of throwing them into the trash. Making

*continued on page 3*



Laurie Osher

## New Campus Signs Changing the UMaine Landscape



Cartographer Michael Hermann at the UMaine Canadian American Center has led the initiative to make UMaine maps more useful by erecting new street signs and replacing outdated building signs.

Cartographer Michael Hermann at the University of Maine's Canadian-American Center has a very sharp eye for detail.

Equally enthusiastic about signage, and "way-finding," Hermann has been working to upgrade or install new street and building signs on campus. It's a project he's been working on since his arrival at UMaine in 2000.

In addition to working with colleagues to create maps of Ice Age glacial movement through Maine and the Canadian Maritimes, or a unique historical atlas of Maine, overlaying historical and cultural events with the ecological, environmental and geological evolution of the state, Hermann helped create three different maps of the UMaine campus. One is for Parking Services, one for Campus Recreation and another details the history of the campus and its historic buildings.

With endorsement from the Kennedy administration, Public Safety, Facilities Management and campus planners, bold new street signs are now being installed at all

33 campus intersections. The street signs are being paid for by an anonymous donation to the University of Maine Foundation. New blue building signs also are popping up around campus, slowly replacing the decades-old brown and white plywood signs.

The metal blue and white street signs, each bearing the UMaine crest logo, are being attached to 10-foot steel poles.

"Working closely with Bart Gallant and his talented grounds crew, our goal is to get them all up by graduation," Hermann says.

Hermann recalls making a street map of the campus about six years ago and thinking it "bizarre that we published maps with street names, but there were no street signs."

Hermann wondered about safety issues, as well as confused visitors. Consider what could happen if a car hit a pedestrian or bicyclist, he says: "You could have seven people standing around calling 911 with cell phones and no one knows where they are."

To Hermann, legible street signs are a necessary extension of mapping and way-finding.

Signs on buildings also should be replaced, Hermann says. Distinctive new signs are now posted at five buildings and at the Fay Hyland Botanical Garden on College Avenue. Newly signed buildings include Colvin, Alumni, Hitchner and Stevens halls, and the Keyo Building.

Hermann will be working over the summer with potential donors to help change the campus signage landscape. Artistically consistent and better positioned signs will make a

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## Hermann from page 1

more professional impression on prospective students and their parents, as well as returning alumni, he says.

Intentionally designed as unimposing utilitarian markers in a back-to-nature culture of the 1970s, the signs are outdated, Hermann says.

Universities are much more competitive these days and need to project pride and professionalism, he says.

Signs can "imply a sense of poverty if they are broken," Hermann says. "If you've been here a long time, you don't notice the signs. But if people are visiting the campus, trying to decide if they want to drop off their son or daughter for a four-year stay, it kind of makes a statement about how we're going to take care of their kids."

Replacing signs is no simple matter. Not only are signs expensive, but most of the more than 200 buildings on campus need an individual assessment to determine what type, what size and whether buildings like Fogler Library even need free-standing signs.

Next on Hermann's agenda: sprucing up or replacing gateway signs at the entrances to campus.

The university's industrial park-style gateway signs should be aesthetically landscaped symbols reflective of the UMaine's status as a flagship institution and the "nucleus of the best and the brightest in this part of the state," he says.

Hermann can be contacted for details about the new signs fund or about the upgrades by e-mail at [mike.hermann@umit.maine.edu](mailto:mike.hermann@umit.maine.edu) or by telephone at 581-4228. ■



*Inside UMaine* is published monthly by the Department of University Relations, and its success depends upon a community-wide effort. We ask you to please forward news, notes and tips about friends, colleagues — or yourselves — to George Manlove by e-mailing: [insideum@maine.edu](mailto:insideum@maine.edu), calling 581-3756 or mailing to Inside UMaine, Dept. of University Relations, 5761 Keyo Building, Orono, ME, 04469-5761. You can find *Inside UMaine* on the Web ([www.umaine.edu/insideumaine](http://www.umaine.edu/insideumaine)). We welcome your feedback.

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## ALONG THE MALL . . .



### Dalton Named Journal Editor

Timothy J. Dalton, associate professor of resource economics policy, recently was appointed associate editor to the *American Journal of*

*Agricultural Economics*, the nation's flagship journal in agricultural economics.

As an associate editor, Dalton will review and edit articles, and help select the outstanding journal submission each year. The journal has been published since 1919.

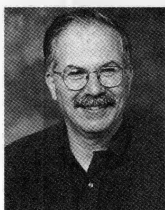


### Gibson Wins Teaching Award

Virginia Gibson, associate professor of management in the Maine Business School, has received the school's first Outstanding Teaching Award.

Gibson, a UMaine alum who has taught here since 1982, has become an inspiring role model for students, says Ivan Manev, associate professor of management, in a letter of recommendation.

Dan Innis, director of the Maine Business School, calls Gibson "one of those professors that students remember long after graduation."

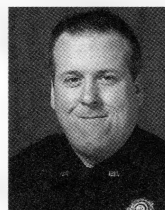


### Barkan Receives Textbook Award

UMaine sociology professor Steve Barkan's textbook, *Criminology: A Sociological Understanding*, 3/e has won the 2006 "Texty" Textbook

Excellence Award from the Text and Academic Authors Association.

It was selected as the best textbook published last year in any humanities or social science field.



### Gardner Wins Merit Award

UMaine Public Safety Detective Sgt. Chris Gardner has been selected by the New England Narcotic Enforcement Officers' Association to receive

the 2006 Special Achievement Award in recognition of his contribution to narcotics enforcement efforts.

Gardner will receive the award May 25 at the Spring Training Conference and Awards Banquet in Hyannis, Massachusetts.

Public Safety Director Noel March said in a letter nominating Gardner for the award that Public Safety strives to provide an environment for students that allows them to be safe and successful, helping them to graduate with both a degree and "a healthy understanding of their role as responsible community members."

### UMaine Diver Rigaud Joins National Board

Diving Safety Officer Christopher Rigaud, who oversees the University of Maine Scientific Diving Program, recently was named to the board of directors of the American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS).

AAUS is a self-regulated consortium of universities, research institutes and other organizations that promote the advancement of underwater science and scientific diving, and promulgate guidelines for the conduct of scientific diving programs.

Employed through the Department of Safety and Environmental Management, Rigaud provides training and supervision for scientific diving activities, and ensures compliance with state, federal and university diving regulations.

## Residence Life Recruiting Associates in Residence

The Department of Residence Life is accepting applications for faculty members or teaching associates interested in serving as mentors and informal advisors to dormitory residents.

The Faculty/Associate-in-Residence Program offers room and board in exchange for participation. Participants work with residence hall students in a variety of capacities and help organize activities that typically include discussions about study habits, preparing for finals, proofreading, and educational and social endeavors.

Five of the university's residence halls currently have apartments for faculty or staff associates. The residency program

provides an opportunity to get to know students and help them through academic and personal challenges, as well as to have a lot of fun, says AnneMarie Reed, associate director of residence life.

Jim Rog, associate professor of education and physical education, has been a faculty dorm resident with his wife Donna for two years. He's applying for a third.

Rog says the experience has refreshed his understanding of the challenges facing younger college students as they move to a new environment, adjust to class and study schedules, and develop social networks.

More information is available from AnneMarie Reed at 581-4801. ■

## Restored Psalter Unique In-Kind Gift for UMaine Development Office

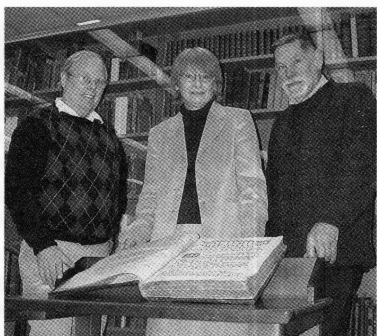
For the UMaine Development Office, almost no gift to the university is too large, small or unusual.

With that in mind, Hannah Whalen, development officer, recently helped arrange a unique in-kind gift to UMaine. She matched the book-binding skills of her father with the needs of Fogler Library's Special Collections for repairs to some of its old books.

Whalen's father, Jonathan Robbins, is a retired high school English teacher from Whitefield whose avocation is collecting, repairing and rebinding rare old books. Special Collections has many volumes of books that date back to the 16th and 17th centuries. Some are damaged and have broken bindings or torn pages.

Robbins recently repaired a three-centuries-old French Psalter, a book of psalms with oversized musical notes and Latin lyrics used by church choirs. He reinforced some of the pages, straightened the warped calfskin cover, and recovered the spine. The book, bearing the characteristic scent of dust and aging paper, was published in 1697 in Paris and donated to Special Collections in the early 1970s.

"This has really been a godsend for us because we just don't have the money for



Richard Hollinger, head of Special Collections at Fogler Library, Joyce Rumery, dean of libraries at UMaine, and bookbinder Jonathan Robbins recently restored as an in-kind gift to the university.

book restoration," says Richard Hollinger, head of Special Collections.

Robbins, a UMaine alum who earned a master's degree in liberal studies at UMaine in 1993, says the repaired Psalter is good for another century, and now can be used for historical research or even in performance by one of the university's choral ensembles.

"The goal is to make it a useable book," Robbins says.

Donating skills to UMaine is one form of in-kind giving, Whalen says, but book-binding, in this case, "is a very unique in-kind gift, because nothing like this has ever been done before."

More common are gifts in the form of labor and materials, such as those donated for the restoration of the Fogler Library steps and terrace. Some people lend their expertise to the university as volunteer consultants, like the arborists who advised the Campus Arboretum and Beautification Committee when it was researching the types of shade trees that might be used to replace the existing ash on the mall.

The UMaine Development Office receives and coordinates gifts and donations for any number of immediate needs on campus, including capital improvement projects.

### Athletic Events



5/13	Baseball vs. Hartford	1:00
5/14	Baseball vs. Hartford	1:00
	Baseball vs. Hartford	TBA
5/15	Softball vs. Hartford	1:00

### MCA Event

#### Will Rogers Follies

May 11, 7 p.m., Hutchins Concert Hall

According to Whalen and Patricia Cummings, senior development officer, there are many talented people in Maine who may not realize their skills could be valuable to the university.

"We like people to be involved and share their talents," Cummings says. "There are as many ways to donate as there are talents. The book restoration was using a very specific talent to help the university."

Whalen says all gifts are welcome. The Development Office also has a list of naming opportunities for a variety of campus projects, she adds.

"These naming opportunities are designed to match an array of donor interests," she says. "In whatever capacity a donor chooses to give to the university, the Development Office is ready to help coordinate and facilitate the entire giving and recognition process." ■

### Osher from page 1

compost is good for gardens and good for the planet. An aerated compost pile helps the decomposition processes—the breaking down of rotting matter into reusable, recyclable nutrients and CO<sub>2</sub>. Compost spread on soil feeds plants and the microbes that assist in keeping soil healthy.

Tossing organic waste in the trash, and ultimately landfills, results in anaerobic decomposition. This creates methane gas, a greenhouse gas four times more damaging to the Earth's atmosphere than carbon. It also wastes organic food for the soil.

Chemical fertilizers may create quick results for vegetable and flower gardens, but Osher compares them to feeding a child marshmallows, instead of a balance of foods that break down and provide energy over a longer period of time.

At UMaine, Osher continues to study how people are changing the environment, focusing in a recent study with graduate student

Teresa Thornton on the movement of an herbicide used on blueberry fields into ground and surface waters. In another project, Osher studied the degree to which biosolids—composted wastewater treatment sludge—release heavy metals into the soil and water when used in place of topsoil.

Osher also is the coach for UMaine's student soil judging team, which competes throughout the Northeast.

In the fall, UMaine will host the regional soil judging competition. Soil-judging teams from nine colleges or universities will come to Orono to learn about the soils of Maine and test their soil-describing skills.

To soil scientists like Osher, assessing soils is as specialized a discipline as assessing fine wines or distinguishing between different blends of coffee—but one that most people take for granted. ■

## PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

**Richard Blanke**, professor, history, "The Foreign City: Breslau, 1945," *Slavic Review* (Spring 2006).

**Richard Brucher**, associate professor, English, "Piracy and Prophecy in Heywood's *Fortune by Land and Sea*," Renaissance Society of America Conference, San Francisco, Calif. (March 23, 2006).

**Maria Equiza**, former post-doctoral researcher; **Michael Day**, associate scientist, ecosystem science; and **Richard Jagels**, professor, forest biology, "Physiological Responses of Three Deciduous Conifers (*Metasequoia Glyptostroboides*, *Taxodium Distichum* and *Larix Laricina*) to Continuous Light: Adaptive Implications for the Early Tertiary Polar Summer," *Tree Physiology* (March 2006).

**Nathan Godfried**, professor, history, "Broadcast Journalism and Organic Intellectuals: Leftist Radio News Commentators, 1945-1950," paper at The Joint Meeting of the American Journalism Historians Association and The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication—History Division, Fordham University, New York (March 18, 2006).

**Gisela Hoecherl-Alden**, assistant professor, German, modern languages and classics, keynote address, "English is Not Enough: Promoting Cultural Proficiency in a Global Community," annual conference, Foreign Language Association of Maine, Portland (March 9); also, Hoecherl-Alden and Jennifer Peterson, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, a presentation, "Envisioning Culture: Intermediate Students Read Literature Across Disciplines," annual Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, New York City (March 31, 2006).

**Dilip K. Lakshman**, former research scientist, **Chunyu Liu**, former graduate student, **Prashant K. Mishra**, former postdoctoral fellow, and **Stellos Tavantzis**, professor, fungal genetics, "Characterization of the Arom Gene in *Rhizoctonia Solani*, and Transcription Patterns Under Stable and Induced Hypovirulence Conditions," *Current Genetics* (March 2006).

**David H. Lambert**, associate professor, plant, soil and environmental sciences; **Alvin Reeves**, UMaine potato breeder, Aroostook Farm; Robert W. Goth, retired, USDA, Beltsville, Md. and Aroostook Farm; **Garland S. Grounds**, scientific technician biological sciences, Aroostook Farm; **Elbridge A. Giggie**, scientific technician, plant soil and environmental sciences, Aroostook Farm, "Relative Susceptibility of Potato Varieties to *Streptomyces scabiei* and *S. acidiscabies*," *American Journal of Potato Research* (Jan.-Feb. 2006).

**Ivan Manev**, associate professor, management, two lectures: "Exploring Business Opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe," to a business audience; and "Doing Business in the Czech Republic and Hungary," to MBA students; and a presentation, "Leadership and Innovation: The Role of Cultural Moderators," to a faculty audience, the Emerging Markets Initiative, Youngstown State University, Ohio (Feb. 28-March 1, 2006).

**Vishakha Maskey**, former graduate student; **Tesfa G. Gebremedhin**, professor, agricultural and resource economics, West Virginia University; and **Timothy J. Dalton**, assistant professor, resource economics and policy, "Social and Cultural Determinants of Collective Management of Community Forest in Nepal," *Journal of Forest Economics* (2006).

**Lawrence M. Mayer**, professor; oceanography; **Linda L. Schick**, research associate, lab coordinator, Darling Marine Center; **Krysia Skorko**, former summer intern, Research Experience for Undergraduates program; **Emmanuel Boss**, associate professor, oceanography, "Photodissolution of Particulate Organic Matter from Sediments," *Limnology And Oceanography* (March 2006).

**Jessica P. Miller**, assistant professor, philosophy, "Defining 'Research' in Rural Healthcare Ethics Research," *The American Journal of Bioethics* (March-April 2006).

**Josef Vesely**, Czech Geological Survey, Prague, Czech Republic; **Vladimir Majer**, Czech Geological Survey, Prague, C.R.; **Jiri Kopacek**, Academy of Sciences, Hydrobiological Institute, Ceske Budejovice, C.R.; **J. Safanda**, Academy of Sciences, Geophysical Institute, Prague, C.R.; and **Stephen A. Norton**, professor, geological sciences, "Increasing Silicon Concentrations in Bohemian Forest Lakes," *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences* (2005).

**Scott Peterson**, lecturer, English; **Allison Whitney** and **Eric Beenfeldt**, lecturers, electrical and computer engineering, the American Society for Engineering Education, New England Section conference, presentation and proceedings publication, "Engineers Take On Writing: Integrating Technical Writing Instruction in Second- and Third-year Engineering Courses" (March 2006).

**Daniel Sandweiss**, professor, anthropology and climate change, dean and associate provost for graduate studies, and Sigma Xi Distinguished Lecturer, presentation, "Ancient Fishermen: 13,000 Years of South American Maritime

Adaptation," Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Fla. (Feb. 2006); and "Explorations with Thor Heyerdahl: Peruvian Pyramids and a Cuban Connection," Roche Pharmaceuticals, Nutley, N.J., and University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez (March 2006).

**Janet E. Spector**, associate professor, education; and **Theodore Coladarci**, professor, education, "Teacher Judgment and Student Test Scores: Which Is the Better Predictor of Subsequent Reading Performance?"; also Coladarci, "School Size, Student Achievement and the 'Power Rating' of Poverty: Substantive Finding or Statistical Artifact?"; and Robert Ervin, superintendent, Bangor School Department, and Coladarci, "Full-Day vs. Half-Day Kindergarten: Proximal and Distal Effects on Academic Achievement," all at the 2006 meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

## CALENDAR

For a full listing of UMaine activities and calendar events, check the Web at:  
**<http://calendar.umaine.edu>**

### Save the Date!

**Go Blue Friday  
May 12**

**Commencement  
Alfond Arena, May 13**

### Online Resources

#### UMaine

[www.umaine.edu](http://www.umaine.edu)

#### Inside UMaine

[www.umaine.edu/insideumaine](http://www.umaine.edu/insideumaine)

#### UMaine Today Online

[www.umaine.edu/umainetoday](http://www.umaine.edu/umainetoday)

#### UMaine Today magazine

[www.umainetoday.umaine.edu](http://www.umainetoday.umaine.edu)

#### MaineSci Journal

[www.umaine.edu/mainesci](http://www.umaine.edu/mainesci)

#### Go Black Bears

<http://goblackbears.collegesports.com>